

Dark Winter 2001

During June 22 and 23, 2001, less than three months before the 9/11 attacks, the Pentagon launched a war game code-named Operation Dark Winter at Andrews Air Force Base that emphasized the military's earnest commitment to bioweapon vaccines. Robert Kadlec, the lead organizer of this pandemic simulation, also coined its code name. The "tabletop" scenario simulated a smallpox attack on US locations, beginning in Oklahoma City (the site of a real domestic terror attack in 1995). Dark Winter participants explored strategies for imposing coercive quarantines; censorship; mandatory masking, lockdowns, and vaccination; and expanded police powers as the only rational responses to the pandemic. The failure, in the Dark Winter case, to quickly implement such countermeasures allowed the galloping spread of the Pentagon's imaginary smallpox epidemic to overwhelm America's response capabilities, precipitating massive civilian casualties, widespread panic, societal breakdown, and mob violence. The Pentagon summary of the exercise concluded that scarcity of vaccines to curtail the contagion's spread proved the most severe limitation on management options. The Dark Winter exercise eerily predicted many aspects of what would follow just months later with the anthrax letter attacks. Such uncanny miracles of foreshadowing became a recurring feature of each subsequent Germ Game.

The Spooks and the Simulations

By playing the role of US president, the Senate Defense Committee's longtime chairman, Senator Sam Nunn, a dyed-in-the-wool war hawk, brought prestige, urgency, and a militaristic gestalt to Kadlec's Dark Winter exercise. Most of the other key participants shared Kadlec's intelligence agency pedigrees. CIA involvement was a consistent feature of this and all the subsequent simulations. Other participants included: Robert Kadlec's fellow intelligence officer and War College professor, Colonel Randall Larsen (USAF), another career bioweapons expert, who helped choreograph the exercise and appeared in its fictional, scripted news clips; CIA's former director, James Woolsey, was a participant and organizer, as was a pharmaceutical industry lobbyist and biological weapons expert; Tara O'Toole, a Director of the CIA hedge fund In-Q-Tel; the CIA's former deputy director for Science and Technology, Ruth David; Hopkins bioterrorism expert Tom Inglesby; and New York Times journalist Judith Miller also participated. James Woolsey's presence and that of Col. Larsen, Ruth David, and Tara O'Toole signaled the intelligence community's ubiquitous but shadowy presence in biosecurity and all things vaccine. (I sat on a board with Woolsey for several years and am familiar with his deep anxieties about germ warfare.) Woolsey's germophobia rivals Kadlec's; Woolsey calls a biological weapons attack "the single most dangerous threat to US national security in the foreseeable future." O'Toole is a biodefense enthusiast, cofounder of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, and executive vice president at the

CIA's investment arm, In-Q-Tel. That shady firm is the vector by which US intelligence services infiltrate start-up firms on the cutting edge of technological innovation. O'Toole, like her long-time confederate Kadlec, juggles deep and disturbing relationships with the same retinue of rapacious pharmaceutical industry and military contractors that Kadlec also cultivated. In 2009, when President Obama nominated O'Toole for undersecretary for Science and Technology at the Department of Homeland Security, Sen. John McCain criticized her for concealing her role as strategic director of a pharmaceutical industry lobbying outfit, Alliance Biosciences. Alliance is an unincorporated corporate front group created by Ibrahim El-Hibri and his partner, former Joint Chiefs Chair Admiral William Crowe, and funded by other bioweapons firms. Alliance has no tax filing and operates out of a K Street influence shop. The Congressional Record shows that the Alliance is a so-called "stealth lobbying" firm that spent \$500,000 over 2005 to 2009 pitching Congress and the Homeland Security department for greater biodefense expenditures, and particularly for anthrax vaccines. Alliance's other funders include Pfizer; the International Pharmaceutical Aerosol Consortium; and Sig Technologies, a biodefense military contractor. O'Toole's nomination to undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security also prompted objections from more mainstream bioweapons experts, including the preeminent Rutgers microbiologist Richard Ebright: "She was the single most extreme person, either in or out of government,

advocating for a massive biodefense expansion and relaxation of provisions for safety and security.” Ebright added, “She makes Dr. Strangelove look sane. O’Toole supported every flawed decision and counterproductive policy on biodefense, biosafety, and biosecurity during the Bush Administration. O’Toole is as out of touch with reality, and . . . paranoiac. . . . It would be hard to think of a person less well-suited for the position.” During those same 2009 confirmation hearings, Democratic Senator Carl Levin of Michigan added to the voices of skepticism: “Dr. O’Toole fell short of the strict adherence to scientific principles when she was the director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies.” Noting that “Dr. O’Toole was one of the principal designers and authors of the June 2001 Dark Winter exercise that simulated a covert attack on the United States by bioterrorists,” Levin faulted O’Toole for using the exercise to promote her biosecurity agenda with hyperbolic pandemic fantasies: “But many top scientists have said that the Dark Winter exercise was based on faulty and exaggerated assumptions about the transmission rate of smallpox.” Dr. James Koopman of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan made the ungenerous assessment that O’Toole’s enthusiasm for germ warfare had clouded her scientific judgment. Koopman, an expert at modeling the transmission rates of infectious diseases who participated in the smallpox eradication program, complained that Dr. O’Toole “has not sought balanced scientific input in her thinking, that she shows a lack of analytic orientation to scientific

issues, and that she has generated hype about bioterrorism that she will feel obligated to defend rather than pursue a balanced approach.” Dr. Michael Lane, the former director of the Centers for Disease Control Smallpox Eradication Program, likewise condemned O’Toole for padding her assumptions about smallpox transmission rates in Dark Winter, which he characterized as “improbable” and even “absurd.” Ironically, even Dr. Fauci, who by then was already the king of embellishing and fabricating pandemics, voiced his disapproval of O’Toole and Kadlec’s extreme Dark Winter exaggerations, which Dr. Fauci declared “much, much worse than would have been the case” in real life. The transmission rate of smallpox was not the only area where Dr. O’Toole and Kadlec ignored facts. On February 19, 2002, O’Toole wrote that “Many experts believe that the smallpox virus is not confined to these two official repositories [one in the United States and one in Russia] and may be in the possession of states or subnational groups pursuing active biological weapons programs.” O’Toole cited a June 13, 1999, New York Times article as the source for her alarming assertion that “subnational groups” controlled smallpox stocks. But that article included no reference to any non-state group actors possessing any biological weapons. Another key Dark Winter planner and participant was Ruth David, a former deputy director at the CIA. In 1998, David became president of ANSER, a nonprofit corporation with deep ties to the CIA. ANSER played a key role in pushing the government toward “homeland security” post-9/11 and became a primary

promoter of biometric and facial recognition software for US law enforcement agencies. Among other functions, ANSER funds a mysterious defense contractor from South Carolina called Advanced Technology International. ATI somehow became the vector through which the government arranged at least \$6 billion of secretive Operation Warp Speed vaccine contracts with Pfizer, Bill Gates's Novavax vaccine, Johnson & Johnson, and Sanofi. Those contracts, comprising the majority of Operation Warp Speed's \$10 billion budget, suggest a deep CIA involvement with the COVID-19 vaccine enterprise's cozy deals with Big Pharma. As assistant secretary for Preparedness and Response with HHS, Robert Kadlec personally signed off on those sweetheart deals. The terms allow Operation Warp Speed to completely "bypass the regulatory oversight and transparency of traditional federal contracting mechanisms," as NPR put it.⁴⁰ In a January 2021 exposé, the New York Times dug into Kadlec's secretive vaccine contracts, observing that "available documents . . . suggest that drug companies demanded, and received, flexible delivery schedules, as well as patent protection and immunity from liability if anything goes wrong. In some instances, countries are prohibited from donating or reselling doses, a ban that could hamper efforts to get vaccines to poor countries."

Dark Winter Aftermath

Despite all its hiccups, Dark Winter was an extraordinary success. It foreshadowed the real bioweapons incidents occurring less than three months later, inflamed public

germophobia, and fortified the official narrative after the first September 18 anthrax attack letters, which pointed fingers at Saddam Hussein and/or al-Qaeda as the probable culprits. Several Dark Winter participants displayed extraordinary prescience in the weeks leading up to the anthrax attacks, along with a relentless determination to pin the caper on Saddam. The anthrax attack's first casualty, Robert Stevens, was hospitalized and diagnosed with anthrax on October 2. Highly publicized and laudatory Senate hearings on the Dark Winter simulation that began on October 1, 2001—three days before the anthrax attacks became public knowledge—functioned to imbue US government officials, the national press, and the public with Dark Winter's paranoid assumptions and to assign the blame to Saddam. Another Dark Winter planner, Jerome Hauer, along with spymaster James Woolsey and New York Times reporter Judith Miller, spent the three weeks between 9/11 and 10/4 banging the gong about imminent anthrax attacks, carpet-bombing the television talk shows, kibitzing on the nightly news, and gabbing up the Sunday morning TV gasbags. Judith Miller received special assistance in this task from her employer, the New York Times, which published her numerous alarmist reports and warnings about coming biological attacks on American soil. Incredibly, the attack arrived exactly as Miller, Hauer, and Woolsey predicted and with exquisite timing — smack in the middle of the US Senate hearings over America's vulnerability to an anthrax attack. Hauer, a bioterrorism expert and pharmaceutical industry

operative, is currently an executive with Teneo, a consulting firm that counsels corporations on security matters and is one of the leading advocates of mandatory vaccines for employees as a condition for employment. Members of the think tank the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) also played a key role in sounding the alarm that a biological weapons attack was certain to follow on the heels of 9/11 and then simultaneously amplified the panic and blamed Iraq following the anthrax letter attacks. PNAC's core doctrine was that, as the Cold War victor, America and US-based multinationals—particularly petroleum and pharmaceutical companies—had earned the right to rule the world for a century or so. PNAC members populated virtually all of the key foreign policy posts in the Bush White House. The warmongering cabal called themselves “The Vulcans” in honor of their belligerent brand of US imperialism. Their members included Dick Cheney, Scooter Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, Douglas Feith, Elliott Abrams, John Bolton, and Rumsfeld's advisers Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. Critics called them the “Chicken Hawks” because ironically, each one of them had draft-dodged the Vietnam War. Osama bin Laden, the author of the World Trade Center attacks, supposedly directed that operation from an Afghan cave. But Donald Rumsfeld complained, “There aren't any good targets in Afghanistan.” The PNAC chicken hawks were determined to use 9/11 as a pretext for a war against Iraq, beneath which God had mischievously stockpiled so much of America's oil. Anthrax provided that provocation. Control of global oil resources was, for PNAC, a key

stepping-stone for the coming century of American imperialism, and a bioweapon attack against America became the ideal provocation for preemptive invasion. It's noteworthy that Judith Miller not only covered the Dark Winter exercise for the New York Times, she was also an active planner and participant in the simulation, playing the part of a reporter. Miller was an O.G. germaphobe and veteran biosecurity booster. On September 4, 2001, exactly one week before the 9/11 attacks, Miller, excerpting from a paranoid book, *Germs*, she had written with Times reporters William Broad and Steve Engelberg, reported approvingly in the New York Times that the Pentagon had green-lighted "a project to make a potentially more potent form of anthrax bacteria." Miller did not explain why this response seemed rational or even sane. Miller's articles repeating Pentagon and CIA claims about Saddam's bioweapons cache and his probable involvement with the anthrax attacks helped fuel the US invasion of Iraq. According to *New York Magazine*: During the winter of 2001 and throughout 2002, Miller produced a series of stunning stories about Saddam Hussein's ambition and capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction . . . almost all of which have turned out to be stunningly inaccurate. Miller's jingoistic reporting—*New York Magazine* dubbed her "Chicken Little"—played such a decisive role in validating the White House warmongers' Iraq invasion agenda that the New York Times afterward made an unprecedented apology for its role in what then was, arguably, the worst foreign policy decision in United

States history. Miller was so keen to facilitate an Iraq invasion that she illegally leaked the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame, to punish Plame's husband, State Department diplomat Joseph Wilson, who had publicly challenged White House and CIA narratives about Iraq obtaining yellowcake uranium from Niger. The CIA, at that time, was aggressively pushing for war. George W. Bush later said that his worst mistake during his White House years was swallowing the CIA's guarantees: "The biggest regret of all the presidency has to have been the intelligence failure in Iraq. A lot of people put their reputations on the line and said the weapons of mass destruction is a reason to remove Saddam Hussein." In 2003, during the run-up to the war, CIA Director George Tenet assured President Bush that Saddam had a secret arsenal of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs): "Don't worry, it's a slam dunk." Miller served three months in jail for contempt before she agreed to disclose the identity of her confederate, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, V.P. Cheney's chief of staff. Libby, who told Miller that Plame was a clandestine CIA agent and directed her to publish the revelation, subsequently went to prison for the crime. It will be many years before the CIA releases documents explaining the agency's true relationships, if any, with Miller and Libby. Libby, a PNAC founder and key visionary and promoter of America's 100-Year Reich, was an early champion of the modern biosecurity agenda, with multiple personal connections with the intelligence community at Yale, Rand, Northrop Grumman, and the Pentagon. The State Department's Bureau of East Asian

and Pacific Affairs—his employer in the early 1980s—had, and still has, deep CIA ties. His obsession with bioterrorism led Libby to write a novel about a smallpox pandemic and earned him the White House nickname “Germ Boy.” Following his pardon and subsequent prison release by President Donald Trump, Libby joined Robert Kadlec’s Blue Ribbon Panel for Biodefense (BRPB), which promotes: biosecurity as the fulcrum of US foreign policy, the twenty-first century as the age of US empire, and mass vaccination as a foreign policy tool. Libby’s fellow BRPB director, William Karesh, is the executive vice president of Peter Daszak’s EcoHealth Alliance, the organization through which Dr. Fauci, Kadlec, and the Pentagon— through DARPA—were laundering gain-of-function payments to Chinese scientists in Wuhan. Libby also serves as senior vice president of the Hudson Institute, a think tank with deep connections to the pharmaceutical industry, Monsanto, and the CIA. He guides the institute’s program on national security and defense issues. In 2021, former CIA Director Mike Pompeo joined the Hudson Institute. The pervasive CIA involvement in the global vaccine putsch should give us pause. There is nothing in the CIA’s history, in its charter, in its composition, or in its institutional culture that betrays an interest in promoting either public health or democracy. The CIA’s historical preoccupations have been power and control. The CIA has been involved in at least seventy-two attempted and successful coups d’état between 1947 and 1989, involving about a third of the world’s governments. Many of these were functioning

democracies. The CIA does not do public health. It does not do democracy. The CIA does coups d'état.